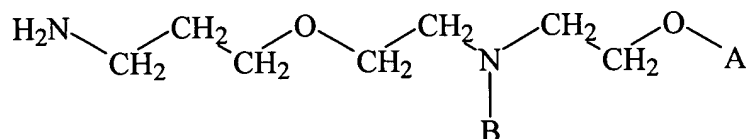


A water-base fluid for use in drilling, cementing, workover, fracturing and abandonment of subterranean wells through a formation containing a shale which swells in the presence of water. In one illustrative embodiment, the drilling fluid includes, an aqueous based continuous phase, a weighting agent, and a shale hydration inhibition agent. The shale hydration inhibition agent should have the general formula:



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